VII. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Clans

The tribe is divided into some thirty clans, grouped into moieties, whose names I could never discover; I shall therefore refer to them here simply as A and B. The Tukuna language has only one word, kja', for both tribe and clan. In Brazil, moiety A has fifteen clans, moiety B twenty-one. It is possible that in Colombia and Peru there are Tukuna clans that are not represented in Brazil. Descent is patrilineal. Members of different clans but of the same moiety deal with one another reciprocally as ma'i°e, "brother" (vocative).

The Tukuna know that, whether in Peru, Colombia, or Brazil, they form a homogeneous and distinct people compared with the other Indian tribes or the Neo-American nations. However, they have never had the slightest political cohesion.

A certain feeling of solidarity unites clansmen, even extending to all the clans of the same moiety. At least I noticed that, if no other considerations were involved, in any problem the Indian would automatically place himself and his sympathies on the side of the members of his clan or moiety without, however, being morally obligated to aid them.

Of the fifteen clans of moiety A, twelve have the names of trees, two the names of insects, and one the name of a mammal.

Clans of Moiety A

Clan	Related Tree or Animal	Additional Correlation
a:'ru	auahy grande (*Thevetia* sp.)	dyɔ|'; acutipurú, squirrel (*Sciurus* sp.)
čĕ'vĕru	auahy pequeno (?), a bird	
na'i°yɛɛ	saúva (*Atta* sp.), ant	Tessmann's "náika"
tɛku	saúva (another species?)	
čiva'	seringarana, a tree	a'i (*onça pintada*), spotted jaguar, Tessmann's "áika"
nĕ'/n|°	pau mulato, a tree (sp. ?)	nĕ'/ma suçuarana (*Felis concolor*)
čĕĕ'	acapú, tree (*Vouacapoua* sp.)	a'iru, dog
ĕ	genipapo (*Genipa* sp.)	dyɔ|'; acutipurú, squirrel, (*Sciurus* sp.) (another sp. ?)
pu'k|rĕ	muirapiranga (*Brosium* sp.)	
ču°a	caraná (*Mauritia carana*, Wall.)	
tĕ'ma	burity grosso (*Mauritia* sp.)	
va'ira	açahy (*Euterpe* sp.)	
a'ičanari	genipapo do igapó, tree (sp. ?)	
kĕ'turĕ	maracajá grande (*Felis pardalis*)	
nyĕ'ai°ĕi	burity fino (*Mauritia* sp.)	

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SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

614 Of the trees, five are identified with animals. Probably the clan kə̃'turə̃ (maracajá grande; *Felis pardalis*) is also to be identified with some tree, perhaps
● 616 with the pu'kirə̃, but of this I am not certain. The identification of trees with
824 mammals is due to the mystic Tukuna conception of the soul (nai^{a}-ar| ma'-ṅ)
825 which certain trees possess. The tree's soul leaves it during the night in the form
774 of the animal with which the tree is identified, returning at daybreak. "a'i-k|a' na i^{a}i^{a} ya čiva'" ("Clan Jaguar is seringarana") or "a'i na i^{a}i^{a} na-a'e ya čiva'" ("Seringarana has the soul of the painted jaguar"). In vain I tried to discover the reason for including the two clans having insect names with these clans that have tree names; no soul of a tree takes the saúva ant as its nocturnal form. Two informants told me independently that the relation between trees and saúva was that the ants were in the habit of crawling on trees.

614 All the clans of Moiety B have the names of birds.

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825 **Clans of Moiety B[1]**

Clan	Related Bird	Additional Correlation
ta'u	toucan (*Rhamphastos* sp.)	
tuyuyu'	tujujú (*Tantalus loculator*)	
aivə̃'ru	urumutúm (*Nothocrax urumutum*)	
kaurə̃'	japihím (*Cassicus cela*, L. sp.)	
bar|'	japú (*Ostinops decumanus*, Pall.)	
ñɔ|'	arara vermelho (*Ara macao*)	
čara'	arara canindé (*Ara ararauna*)	
vɔɔ'	maracanã grande (*Ara maracana* ?)	
a'/ta	maracanã; another species (*Ara* sp. ?)	
vẽu'	parrot (*Amazona* sp.)	
ñu/nę^{a}	mutum cavallo (*Mitua mitu*)	Tessmann's "nãenoka"
mɔru	maracanã; another species (*Ara* sp. ?)	
ə̃'/ča	urubú rei (*Gypagus papa*)	
da:'v|	gavião real (*Thrassaetus harpya*)	
pu^{a}a'ka	arapaço (*Nasica* sp.)	
ɔta'	chicken	
ə̃'/nə̃	parakeet (*Conurus* sp. ?)	
dyav|ru'	jaburú (*Mycteria americana*)	
ña'u^{a}a	socó (*Ardea* sp.) or maguary (*Ardea cocoi*)	

[824] The relations between the clan member and the tree or animal the name of which he bears are extremely few and do not follow any rule whatsoever.

304 It is clear that members of the macaw clans, čara' and vɔɔ', formerly used facial
614 tattooing in designs similar to the facial feathering of these birds. I did not suc-

[1] It will be noted that the author lists only 19 clans here, although he has previously referred to 21.—Ed.

1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

Clan ãu/ŋɛ̃ⁿ

(Horse turkey, mutum cavalo)

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Personal Name	Meaning	Analysis
♂ ʔkira-kị	[turkey] that grows a tail	ʔ, to form; kịra', tail [of a bird]
♂ tĩ'a"kịra-kị	[turkey] spreading tail in fan	tĩ, to spread tail in a fan; kịra', tail [of a bird]
♀ ãua'ẽi-na	[turkey] that arrives suddenly	ãu, to arrive; a'ẽi, suddenly. The turkey, after bathing in the clay pit of the taitetús, dries itself by hopping out with a sudden leap.
♀ mõ̃'tị-na	[turkey] of good sight	mõ, good; ʼtị, eye, vision, sight

Certain persons, old women especially, command a rich repertoire of various clan names, hence they are summoned and consulted when a child is to be given a name. According to Monteiro Noronha and those who quote him, the name was given after circumcision, that is, "shortly after birth." "This [circumcision] ceremony is a result[a] of giving a name to the children with celebrations [and] dances in the presence of a horrible figure which is said to be the Devil [dance mask]."[b]

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Today the name is given when the child is one day old, after the bath; it is conferred by a maternal relative, a member of the moiety complementary to the child's, with a preference for the grandmother in whose house the parents and relatives have gathered with the newborn infant. First, however, names are proposed by one of the women who understand these things, as mentioned above, who are invited for this purpose. Afterward the name is newly proclaimed and confirmed at the ceremony of painting the child red with urucú, when it begins to crawl, and at the hair-plucking ceremony, when the child is two years old. The proclamation of the name is always accompanied by the shout of "ye"!" and the raising of the child's ornaments into the air.

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Nowadays, the Tukuna, except some children, are all baptized by Capuchin friars of São Paulo de Olivença and bear Portuguese names, often pronounced so as to be quite unrecognizable. Some persons are known only by their baptismal names, even among their tribesmen; but without exception all have and know their native names, and I never observed on the part of the owners any reluctance to divulge their names when asked to do so.

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Moieties

The Tukuna refer to the clan quite frequently, but never to the moiety, yet the latter is of much greater importance. The principal function of the moieties is exogamy, although the Tukuna are not aware of the existence of their dual organization; they know only that members of certain clans may not marry members of certain others.

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[a] Literal translation. The statements are contradictory: "name given after circumcision"; "[circumcision] a result of giving a name."—Trans.

[b] Monteiro Noronha, § 140.

1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

616 773 Only one of my informants ever told me a version of the legend of man's creation, attributing the institution of moieties to the culture hero, dyoi'.

> A great number of these people who were first fished for by dyoi' and e'pi were then thrown together helter-skelter, but dyoi' separated his to the east and those of e'pi to the west. [The episode of the institution of clans (see p. 129) follows.] Afterward, he made some marry others.

616 773 881 This version, however, is in accordance with the association of the two culture heroes, as well as the moieties, with the east and west, respectively. For moiety A the position of children and of girls at rites of passage, when prescribed, is always with the face to the east, and the girl's seclusion hut in the puberty ceremony is always placed—at least it was formerly—at the east wall of the house. Moiety B is oriented in the opposite direction. Thus, the men created by dyoi' and e'pi would be those of moieties B and A (*sic*) respectively,[5] but though men of both moieties deal with ta-na'tị̈ ("Our Father"), I never found the slightest indication that some consider themselves the descendants of dyoi' and others those of e'pi, the former being always glorified to the disparagement of the latter.

616 881 In the puberty ceremony there are some significant differences between the two moieties. Thus, the turtleshell drum, pɔ:'vi, is used exclusively by clans of moiety A, whereas the stamping tubes, ba:'/ma, and the bamboo horns, kaⁿ'iri, belong to clans of moiety B. Lately, the stamping tube has been introduced into the ritual of the Japú and Maguary clans of moiety B, a practice which two of my informants held to be an unwarranted innovation.[6]

Exogamy

582 835 609 The tenacity with which the Tukuna respect their laws of exogamy even today, their implacable liquidation of the transgressor, and the complete incomprehension of this by the Neobrazilians, even the priests, are the most serious obstacles to frank promiscuity with the Neobrazilian population, and by preventing such promiscuity they efficiently contribute to the preservation of the tribe. The Tukuna regard the *civilizados*, among whom incest is not uncommon, with a certain contempt, not only because of Indian prejudice but also because the Brazilian law forbids incest, even though they attach no great importance to the law itself. A priest who eventually gives dispensation for the marriage of a man with the daughter of the man's own brother loses the Indians' respect, though a man's marriage with the daughter of his sister is a different matter.

835 773 Incest, vɔ:'maĕi,[7] includes not only carnal union between individuals of the same moiety, but any disrespect shown the sex of a person in the prohibited degree of kinship, such as a simple, involuntary glance at the genitals. According to legend, the first person guilty of incest was e'pi, brother of the culture hero dyoi'. Desiring to take by force half of a royal hawk that his sister mɔva'ča had concealed between her knees, he touched her genitals. She was immediately transformed into a collared peccary (*taitetú*), but the demon ma/ĕi' of the jaguar race killed her with

[5] There is a discrepancy here. According to the legend given above, dyoi''s people (moiety A) are oriented to the east, e'pi's (moiety B) to the west.—Trans.

[6] Another discrepancy! The ba:'/ma belongs to moiety B but is also a recent introduction.—Trans.

[7] "Confused flesh": vɔ:, a jumble of wood fibers entangled with a cipó or liana; na:-maĕi, flesh.

1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

881 773 539 *e*) A girl was in seclusion; a feast was about to be celebrated. Aside from her, there was no one in the house. In the kitchen there lay beneath a cover on the platform (girãu) all the smoked game for the feast. Suddenly, through a crack in the wall of her room, the vərëkị observed a smoked monkey descend from the platform. Seizing a blowgun, it began to dance with this up and down the kitchen. Then a roasted sloth also clambered down, going first to the fireplace to warm itself, then it searched for the rattle stick, which was already prepared for the feast, and in its turn began to dance to and fro. After some time both returned to the platform.

As soon as her mother returned to the house, the vərëkị told her what she had seen. The mother went to the smoked meat on the platform, examined the sloth, and, seeing that it was dirty with ashes, believed what her daughter had told her. "Nothing like this has ever happened before; I believe that you are going to die!" she said to her daughter. And sure enough, the following morning the girl lay dead in her seclusion room.

342 881 [616] Formerly, a small room, na-pi^{n}i^{n} (pl. 11, *a*) was made for the girl as soon as possible, against the east wall of the house if she belonged to moiety A, against the west wall if she belonged to moiety B. This little retreat was circular, two meters in diameter or a little more, and had no floor, since the vərëkị sleeps in her hammock throughout her seclusion. The walls are made of long, white strips of burity, tied with cipó firmly together in horizontal bands. These extend from the floor to the roof thatch, where their tips are bent toward the front. On the left side (looking at the room) there is a door, closed by a kind of hanging mat made from [285] burity frondstalks set in a horizontal position and held firm by two vertical rods. Often today the seclusion room is square and is not erected where it should be, because the position of the house on the banks of the Solimões or igapó does not permit it. In general, to make such a room, people are called together for a work [476] party (uajurí) to which, above all, members of the clans of the vərëkị's moiety are invited.

881 *Preparations for the feast.*—The preparations for the feast which now begins may take more than two months, sometimes requiring even one or two more work parties. Nowadays, what really delays completion of the preparations is the difficulty of collecting a sufficient quantity of smoked game for the number of guests; [136] game is now rare in the country (p. 26), and even fish are not caught easily.

[252] The game is roasted on a forked grill, first in the jungle and later in the kitchen, where it is then stored on its own large, covered platform. When the last pieces arrive, the first are already desiccated to the point where they more or less resemble charred wood. At the same time, the women prepare alcoholic drinks, of [273] which a sufficient quantity is required not only for the feast itself but also for the preliminary work party. In the meantime the date of the celebration must be calculated, so that the invitations may be issued.

881 574 *Invitations.*—Two invitations are given for any celebration: the first advising of the approximate time with relation to the phase of the moon ("in the first full moon"), the other fixing the exact day that the ceremony begins. Feasts are preferably held during the full moon, not because any magical influence is attributed to it but simply because it is much more agreeable to have the house and yard of the ceremony flooded with moonlight than plunged in darkness.

881 574 202 Invitations are delivered personally by the host, that is, by the vərëkị's father or by a person especially charged by him. The messenger travels from house to house informing the residents that the celebration is drawing near and that the

1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

I have occasionally referred and the excesses committed during drunkenness, though characteristic of these people, do not seriously alter the general picture. Among the inhabitants of a house, who are always of the same family, the authority of the father or of the grandfather is supreme, being recognized in an argument, without dispute. The mother or grandmother shares in this authority, especially in the treatment of the daughters. The old man is the owner of the house, though others may have contributed to its construction. If he wishes to move to another locality, all accompany him, even if they are dead set against it.

The inhabitants of neighboring houses are generally in some way related, perhaps representing today the ancient communal dwelling. They share their necessities and likewise distribute any surplus among themselves, always in the most intimate sociability. The diagram (fig. 12) shows the composition of one of these

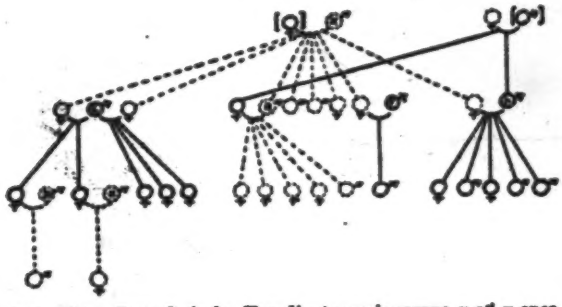

Fig. 12. Clan relationships. Dotted circle, Clan čiva' = seringarana = a'i = onça. Solid line circle, Clan ãũ/nõ' = mutum *fava*.

local groupings of related families, comprising three houses with thirty-two inhabitants. Note that A marries the sister of B, and B marries the sister of A. C marries successively two sisters of A; his two sons-in-law live with him; and F, another brother-in-law, lives with A. The group is therefore composed of sons, sons-in-law, grandsons, and great-grandsons of X, deceased.

Widows and orphans.—In these groups, widows and orphans always find the necessary shelter. A certain widow living with her daughters of thirteen and fifteen years old apparently has her economic life perfectly balanced. The three females plant in the clearing which they themselves are able to clear of undergrowth with a machete; they make farinha; they fish; and they make tucum fiber hammocks for sale. A married son, who lives close by, helps them whenever necessary. Small orphans are adopted by an uncle or aunt, who bring them up with their own children. Formerly, also, the levirate often relieved the situation of a widow and her children. A widower alone with his small children is in a less favorable economic situation; his place is always in a run-down condition, and the children, during the necessary absences of their father, naturally try to make up to the neighboring relatives. Sooner or later, the widower either remarries or, following the example of his sons, moves in with the family of a relative. This is an outstanding demonstration of the economic importance of the Tukuna woman.

2: Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1948
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

apart, which is correlated with their lack of social organization other than blood ties. When drunk they quarrel and often cause injuries and death. In their dealings with the Neo-Brazilians, both parties exhibit their worst qualities. Nevertheless, the *Tucuna* are not unsociable and frequently visit one another and hold festive meetings, when they work collectively for their host. They retain tenaciously their original spiritual culture, although hard work has brought important material improvements. They now have good firearms, tools, clothes, and sewing machines, and they live in financial independence. Some, however, enticed to industrial establishments (rum factories) of the civilized people, become proletarian and then degenerate.

Moieties and clans.—The *Tucuna* are divided into two exogamous, unnamed patrilineal moieties, associated respectively with the east and west. One has 15 unlocalized, patrilineal sibs with tree names; the other has 21 sibs with bird names. Neither the clans nor moieties have outward distinguishing features, except for the private use of certain musical instruments on ceremonial occasions. There is no clear relationship between clan members and their eponym, except that a person's name refers obscurely to certain qualities of the animal or plant, thus revealing his clan. A person is named by his maternal relatives the day after his birth.

The *Tucuna* maintain moiety exogamy with strict inflexibility, and in 1941 still punished violations with death. They regard incest as a sin against the goddess Taé, who punishes it by making one insane during his life and by annihilating his soul after his death.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth and childhood.—After coitus, conception depends on Taé, who gives a soul to children. Abortion and infanticide are practiced, especially when the father is a Neo-Brazilian, as the child would be disqualified for sib and moiety membership. Otherwise, it is believed that infanticide is a sin and that Taé punishes the soul of the perpetrator after death.

Childbirth takes place in a temporary shelter prepared in the bush near the house. The newborn child is immediately painted with genipa. Both parents are confined and diet until the umbilical cord drops off. Children are carried in a woven cotton sling passing over a shoulder. Slings are double in part, so that a child sits in one portion while the other supports its back.

When a child begins to crawl, there is a feast in which it is painted with urucú and covered with bits of parrot feathers while the paint is still sticky. At another feast, formerly celebrated when the child was 2 but now when it is 4, its hair is pulled out and its ears pierced. Contrary to certain authors, this operation does not endanger a child's life. About 8 months later there is a supplementary feast when the hair, having grown again, is trimmed, and the relics of the previous feast are burned.